

Department of Natural Resources Statutes and Regulations

The Department's statutes and regulations are designed to protect the natural resources of the state particularly water, fish and wildlife.

These laws operate principally to regulate the recreational and commercial use of these resources. They also protect the quality of life that attracts visitors and permanent residents to the state.

Drought Response Act

The department's authority that most directly impacts industry is the Drought Response Act (49-23-10 *et seq.*) (R 121-11.1 *et seq.*)

This Act and its implementing regulations are those laws that begin the process that could end in the need to curtail water consumption.

In actuality the effectiveness of the Drought Response Act is very weak because of its structure. The Governor's emergency authority (49-23-80) would be necessary to achieve any meaningful restriction on water use for industry during periods of extreme drought.

Water Resources Planning and Coordinating Act

The Department is also charged with implementing the Water Resources Planning and Coordinating Act (49-3-10 *et seq.*) which is designed to help the Governor and the General Assembly formulate and establish a comprehensive water resource policy for the state. In formulating the State Water Plan the Department must take into consideration those criteria listed at 49-3-50.

The Department does not issue permits for water consumption

Scenic Rivers

The Department can designate water bodies or portions of them for approval by the General Assembly as State Scenic Rivers (48-29-90)

Marine Resources

The Department regulates the take of Marine Resources and anadromous fish including shad, herring; crustaceans such as shrimp, crab, Horseshoe crab and shellfish for commercial and recreational purposes in the salt waters of the state (50-5-10 *et seq.*) The regulation of many of these species is controlled by federal law.

The Department regulates both a saltwater “propagation” industry (Mariculture 50-5-2100 *et seq.*) and a freshwater “propagation” industry (Aquaculture 50-18-210 *et seq.*) These propagation facilities produce fish for both commercial and recreational use.

Recreational

Most of the statutes and regulations the Department administers govern recreational pursuits such as hunting, fishing and boating. These activities have a tremendous impact on the economy of this state. Currently, according to the US Coast Guard South Carolina ranks 8th in the nation in number of boats registered. According to the University of South Carolina Moore School of Business study done in 2009, 235,000 jobs are tied to activities that depend on natural resources. That same study found Hunting, fishing and wildlife watching contributes *three billion seven hundred ninety three million nine hundred seventy three thousand dollars* (\$ 3,793,973,000.00) annually to the South Carolina economy.